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EDITORIAL.

THE SCHOOL AND THE HOME.

A RECENT writer has said that "almost every social ill may be traced directly or indirectly to failures of the family in the more or less remote past. However attempts at alleviation are compelled to address themselves to other institutions, scientific social healing will aim to influence the individual by increasing the efficiency of the family."

As the school has assumed new responsibilities, as its aim has broadened to include the training of the whole child, as its social purpose has developed, it has awakened to the fact that, if it would accomplish the end that it desires, it must take definite account of the home in which the child lives, and must do its utmost to make that home more effective.

That the home is of fundamental importance in the social structure no one will deny. That its function in the community has changed to a great extent, and is changing in practice much more rapidly than in theory, admits of little doubt. That its efficiency has been impaired is feared by many.

The most superficial comparison of the home of today with that of a few generations ago will show certain marked differences. The great industrial changes of the century have transferred the centers of activity from the home to the factory. With all the gain that has resulted from this there has been distinct loss. The small household duties that were once performed by the children of the family were potent factors in their education, and these no longer fall to their share. Among the well-to-do the work of the household is done by employees, and among the poor the children are early sent from the home into productive labor. Barrie regrets this tendency in Scottish life when, in speaking of the introduction of looms, and of the advantages and disadvantages that this has brought, he says: "All the losses would be but a pebble in a sea of gain, were it not for this, that with so many of the family, young mothers among them, working in the factories, home life is not so beautiful as it was. So much of what is great in Scotland has sprung from the closeness of the family ties; it is there, I sometimes fear, that my country is being struck." The concentration of the population in cities has fostered social life, and the multiplicity of outside attractions has often left no room for social intercourse within the family. The diversity of interests that might be made an efficient factor in enriching the home life is often a means of impoverishing it. The ease of moving from one apartment to another, and the general restlessness of the times, has imparted a migratory character to our urban population that was unknown a generation ago.

As a result of these changes, among others, the influence of the home over the child, and its hold upon the family, have been weakened. Home is not so interesting a place as it was. A little girl lamented the other day that Friday had come, and there would be no school for three days, and "there is nothing to do at home." On the other hand, other places are more interesting than they were, and the temptation is great to spend more and more time away from home. Dr. Parkhurst analyzed the situation when he said that when he was a boy he was expected to be at home, unless there was some good reason why he should be somewhere else, but that now everyone expected to be somewhere else, unless there was some good reason why he should be at home. The fact that the child contributes so little, directly and consciously, to the well-being of the home in itself tends to render his love and appreciation less deep than it was in the days when each member of the household, of necessity, had his share in maintaining the family life. A home that lacks the element of permanence must always fail in large measure to elicit the devotion and love that belongs to the time when the homestead was passed down from generation to generation.

The failure of the home is not alone in its waning power over the children, but in a decreasing sense of responsibility on the part of the parents. The church has signified its willingness to superintend the religious life of the children; the school, seeing plainly the deficiencies of the home, has undertaken not only to provide ethical as well as intellectual training, but to care for the physical well-being of its charges; and the parent has too often delegated all responsibility to these institutions. He has failed to remember that his duty does not cease with the provision of a house for shelter, food to eat, and clothes to wear. He has forgotten that, wherever the specific training and teaching of the child is done, to him belongs the general control; and he alone, in the final analysis, is responsible for the growth of the child into a worthy citizen, an efficient social servant.

No one agency has the power to inspire the home to do all its legitimate work, to fulfil all its possibilities; but the school, with its intimate relation to the children, has an opportunity to help that it should not miss. The help can hardly be given, as has been suggested by some, by the refusal to do work which properly belongs to the home, if the home is signally failing to perform it. Nor is it possible to any great extent to suggest to parents that they are neglectful of duty. Intrusion into home affairs is often resented, and the teacher who would exert direct influence in this way must have unusual tact. But the attitude of the school toward the home has much influence. The home should be distinctly recognized as the primary institution. The question, "How can we help you to train your child?" should be more often asked than the common one, "How can you help us to train him?" The school, especially the secondary school, should see that it does not make such demands upon the time and strength of the pupils that there is no opportunity for home duties or for social life in the home.

The most effective service that the school can render the home is to introduce, as part of its curriculum, those studies that have to do with the home and with the industries that are carried on in it. This may be done as a study of food and its preparation, in connection with the cooking class; as a part of the work with the textile industries; as art applied to the furnishing and decoration of the house; as science, in the application of the principles of physics and chemistry to the ventilation and heating and lighting of the house; or as part of history, in tracing the development of the home from primitive dwellings; or as geography, in the study of the homes of other nations, and their modification by climatic and other conditions. Such work, if given in the right spirit, must inevitably tend to make the home a more interesting place to each child, and this interest will engender the desire to do something in the home; and the doing will lead to a better understanding of the meaning of the home, and a deeper love for it.

One other service can be rendered by the teacher that will give hope for the homes of the next generation. So far as we can give to our pupils high and pure ideals of home life, so far we shall have projected our influence into the future. This can be done not so much by direct suggestion as by the unconscious influence that is exerted when our own ideals are true and high.

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